



Water 2025 State Challenge Grant

Kansas Department of Agriculture / 109 SW 9th Street / Topeka, KS 66612
(785) 296-3556 / www.ksda.gov

FACT SHEET

The Kansas Department of Agriculture's division of water resources was awarded a \$230,720 grant by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation under the Water 2025 State Challenge Grants program.

Kansas was among the six states selected to receive the first grants awarded under the Water 2025 program developed specifically for innovative state projects that reduce the likelihood of conflict over scarce water supplies.

According to Gale Norton, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Interior, the Water 2025 State Challenge Grants Program was launched in response to the needs of western state governments to make more efficient use of existing water supplies through cooperative partnerships with the Bureau of Reclamation.

More information about the Water 2025 State Challenge Grants is available online at www.doi.gov/water2025.

The two-year grant requires a 50-50 match by the division of water resources, which it will meet primarily (90 percent) through commitment of staff time to monitor the project. The remaining match (10 percent) will be achieved through travel and equipment installation.

The division of water resources is using the grant for a pilot project in the lower Republican River basin in north-central Kansas. The lower Republican River flows through Clay, Cloud, Jewell, Republic and Washington counties.

The project is to install flow meter data logging equipment on up to 100 groundwater and surface water diversions in the lower Republican River basin. The equipment will transmit water use data via satellite to a website, where it will be accessible by division of water resources staff and individuals who volunteer to participate in the project.

Data will be used to enhance water resource management by the division of water resources, since it will allow water use to be monitored remotely rather than by sending staff into the field to read flow meters.

Water users who volunteer to participate in the project will have access to real-time water use data, which they can use to make more efficient use of water.

Kansas law requires the chief engineer to withhold from use the amount of water needed to maintain minimum streamflow in certain watercourses identified by the Legislature. It is a management tool designed to balance water use among competing interests — quality, quantity, recreation and wildlife needs — during times of shortage.

The minimum desirable streamflow statute applies to water rights applied for and granted after April 12, 1984.

The Republican River is one of the watercourses identified by the Legislature that's subject to the minimum desirable streamflow statute. Kansas monitors 23 streams and rivers under the minimum desirable streamflow program.

Water right holders in the lower Republican River basin can be ordered by the chief engineer to stop diverting water to achieve minimum desirable streamflow in the river. Administration of water rights for minimum desirable streamflow has been in effect continuously in the Republican River basin since May 9, 2002, due to drought and overuse in Nebraska.

In 2002, the chief engineer adopted regulations to allow water users in the Republican River basin with a priority date after April 12, 1984, some flexibility to use water even while achieving minimum desirable streamflow.

Under the 2002 regulations, which are based on historical flow data, water users may enter into an agreement with the division of water resources to use at least some groundwater or surface water even while minimum desirable streamflow administration is under way.

Project volunteers include water right holders who are not subject to water rights administration under the minimum desirable streamflow statute, as well as water right holders who are subject to the statute.